IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Please cancel claims 1-9.

Claim 10 (New): A process for the continuous production of crosslinked fine particles of an addition polymer gel, comprising

copolymerizing a monomer mixture, comprising

- a) one or more water-soluble monoethylenically unsaturated monomers,
- b) from 0.001 to 5 mol% based on the monomers (a) of one or more comonomers containing at least two ethylenically unsaturated groups, and
- c) from 0 to 20 mol% based on the monomers (a) of one or more water-insoluble monoethylenically unsaturated monomers,

wherein the monomers a), b) and c) are present as a 20 to 80% by weight solution in water based on the total amount of a), b), and c), wherein the copolymerizing is carried out in the presence of initiator at from 0 to 140°C by continuously feeding the aqueous solution of the monomers into a mixing kneader having at least two axially parallel rotating shafts having a plurality of kneading and transporting elements to convey the monomer mixture from an upstream end of the mixing kneader in the axial direction toward a downstream end of the mixing kneader in the presence of one or more addition polymerization initiators under an inert gas.

Claim 11 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein the monomer solution is conveyed through the mixing kneader with an inert gas.

Claim 12 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein the aqueous solution of the monomers is fed to the mixing kneader together with an inert gas.

Claim 13 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein the inert gas is wholly or partly generated by a chemical reaction in the mixing kneader.

Claim 14 (New): The process of claim 13, wherein the inert gas is wholly generated by a chemical reaction in the mixing kneader.

Claim 15 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein the process is carried out in the presence of water vapor.

Claim 16 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein not less than 15% of the heat of reaction is removed by evaporation of water.

Claim 17 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein not less than 25% of the heat of reaction is removed by evaporation of water.

Claim 18 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein not less than 45% of the heat of reaction is removed by product discharge.

Claim 19 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein not less than 55% of the heat of reaction is removed by product discharge.

Claim 20 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein not less than 50% of the total heat of reaction is removed by product discharge and water evaporation.

Claim 21 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein not less than 70% of the total heat of reaction is removed by product discharge and water evaporation.

Claim 22 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein not less than 90% of the total heat of reaction is removed by product discharge and water evaporation.

Claim 23 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein the fraction of heat removed by evaporation of water from the reaction mixture is not less than 5% of the heat of reaction and the fraction of heat removed by product discharge is not less than 25% of the heat of reaction and the remainder of the heat is removed via cooling of the reactor walls.

Claim 24 (New): The process of claim 10, wherein no heat is removed via cooling of the reactor walls.

BASIS FOR THE AMENDMENT

Claims 10-24 are active in the present application. Claims 1-9 have been cancelled.

Claims 10-24 are new claims. Support for new Claim 10 is found in original Claim 1.

Support for new Claims 11 and 12 is found on page 6, lines 3-8. Support for new Claims 13

and 14 is found on page 9. Support for new Claim 15 is found on page 6, lines 27-31 and

page 7, lines 15-18. Support for new Claims 16 and 17 is found on page 7, lines 15-18.

Support for new Claims 18 and 19 is found on page 7, lines 20-22. Support for new Claim 20

is found in original Claim 2. Support for new Claims 21 and 22 is found on page 7, lines 24-

27. Support for new Claim 23 is found in original Claim 1. Support for new Claim 24 is

found on page 7, lines 29-30. No new matter is believed to have been added by this

amendment. The specification has been amended to include a cross-reference to the parent

application.

The present application is a Divisional application of U.S. Serial No. 10/111,428, now

allowed.

No new matter is believed to have been added by this amendment. An action on the

merits and allowance of claims is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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